

Cognitive Stimulation Therapy for Dementia

Life After Diagnosis

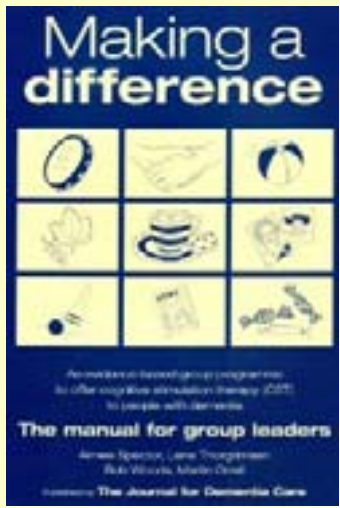
“Our ultimate goal after all, is not a good death but a good life to the very end”
Atul Gawande “Being Mortal”

Why this project? To bring an evidence based treatment to people living with dementia in Waitemata

Background

Cognitive Stimulation Therapy is an evidence based, brief group therapy for people who suffer from dementia. 14 sessions of themed activities are run twice weekly. Sessions aim to actively stimulate and engage people with dementia, to provide an optimal learning environment and the social benefits of a group:

- Worldwide 36 million people live with dementia with 1 case being diagnosed every 4 seconds
- After age 65 the risk of Alzheimer’s doubles every 5 years
- After age 85 the risk reaches nearly 50%
- Of those aged 65 and older, 1 in 9 will develop dementia



People who live with dementia:

- Are drawn into a world of limitations, loss and loneliness
- 1 in 4 (24%) hide diagnosis because of stigma
- 40% report being excluded in everyday life
- Many withdraw from relationships

At 71 years old I was told I had dementia

My whole world changed

My husband took control

I felt like everything was taken from me

I became frustrated and irritable

Life was not worth living

I refused to join my husband for happy hour

I had no confidence

The mental health nurse visited me often

“Then I attended the group and life changed

I could relax

I could talk about my life without judgement

My husband did not need to be by my side

I regained my confidence and some control of my life

I negotiated to make meals again and clean around the house

I became his carer when he became unwell

“I realise I still have a lot to offer”

I began to enjoy being busy again

National Institute for Health & Care Excellence clinical guidelines strongly recommends Cognitive Stimulation Therapy as standard treatment for dementia

Pilot Study

- In October 2013 a study was conducted with the aim of implementing this treatment method across the service
- Since then two further groups were run and an attempt was made to establish a maintenance group
- The group was run twice weekly by two clinicians based on the manual published by A Spector, L Thorgrimsen, B Woods, M.Orrell
- Outcomes were measured using validated scales

Group description

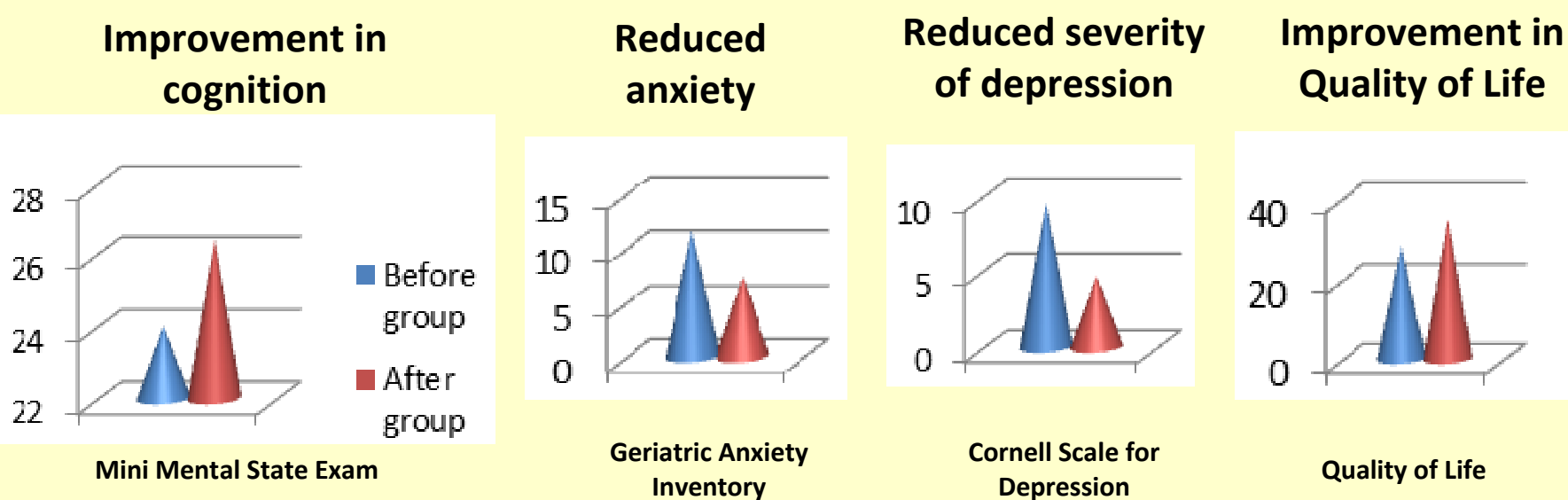
- Ten people met the criteria diagnosed with mild/moderate dementia
- With behavioural and psychological problems
- Average age 75.5 years range (range from 69 – 88 years)

Progress

- There were a total of 14 sessions
- Clinicians utilised Likert scales to monitor interest, communication and mood
- Average rating reached over 80%

Results

Outcomes were measured pre and post group using MMSE, Cornell Scale for Depression, Quality of Life, Geriatric Anxiety Inventory



Benefits

- Significantly improved patients’ health and functioning
- Improved family satisfaction
- Enhanced team members’ confidence and satisfaction
- Cost effective intervention – lower level of care required as functioning improved

Patients and Families

Team

Reflection

At first Gina thought it was 1952. The group motivated her and she could soon state the date with confidence

Since Ron had learned his diagnosis he had withdrawn from social situations due to fear he may make a fool of himself. He regained his confidence in community situations

Mary was fearful and dependent. During group her fun loving personality emerged

The group's culture of fun and acceptance allowed Jane to believe in herself again

“We have such a laugh”

“I am not so tongue-tied”

“Even my mobility has improved”

“Its fun”

“We understand each other”

“I have regained my confidence”

It was wonderful to discover what a difference we could make

The team felt privileged in getting to know group members so well

“connected”

“better, best, brilliant”

The energy in the room was contagious; we all felt better by the end of the group

It was so encouraging for us as a team to witness patients becoming empowered

Running this group was a real pleasure

“everyone matters”

“with compassion”

It was satisfying to see the gains made by each group member